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## THE BEGINNINGS OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN GEORGIA.

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The account here given is restricted in the main to the legislative history of the public school system of Georgia from the beginning of statehood up to the Constitutional Convention of 1868. It is much to be hoped that this confessedly meager account will stimulate to a fuller study someone nearer to the sources of information.<sup>1</sup> There is, for instance, enough material bearing upon the academy movement of itself to make an article, almost a small book in fact. The legislative development of the public school needs moreover to be traced in connection with the general history of the people so as to show the how and why of legislative movements. The most of this the present writer can do in this paper is to venture here and there a commonplace guess as to what may have caused the movement under consideration.

At the time of the Revolution Georgia was less than fifty years old. About half of this time had been passed under an exceptionally well-meaning but peculiarly unfortunate body of trustees seated in England. After 1752, when the crown took over the colony, Georgia enjoyed what appears to be the unique distinction of having an item for the support of her schools, along with the rest of her civil expenses, included

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<sup>1</sup> It should be stated in connection that the writer has been unable to get access to the laws of 1844, 1848, 1861, and 1864 so that possibly, though not probably, he has overlooked some important items.

in the annual budget of the House of Commons.<sup>1</sup> The amount so provided, however, contemplated only two schoolmasters, one in Savannah and one in Augusta, and in size did not suffice to support these, as we know from S. P. G. and allied correspondence.

It seems, however, a fair guess that these two governmentally assisted schools of the colonial days may have in some measure influenced the makers of the constitution of 1777 to put into that document article LIV:

"Schools shall be erected in each county and supported at the general expense of the State, as the legislature shall hereafter point [out] and direct."

It is an easy surmise that the citizens of Savannah and Augusta would wish their own new state government to do as well by them as had the British government, and if so we may be sure that the other counties would wish equal consideration. Whether or not this colonial precedent had any influence on the free state, this constitutional provision marks the beginning of the public educational history of the state. The wording is a trifle obscure but clearly at least one school was to be established in each county. We need not then be surprised to find soon after peace (July 21, 1783) provision made for the establishment of three specified academies (for the counties of Richmond, Wilkes and Burke) and a general provision for granting one thousand acres of vacant land for an academy in each county in the state. Were this the proper time it would be interesting to inquire why this act used in places the term "free school," though elsewhere in the act and later academy was the general term.\* By a House resolution (14 Feb. 1786) the "Commissioners or Trustees appointed for the purpose of instituting academies in the several Counties" were "empowered to sell at public vendue" any confiscated or other State property lying within the county to the amount of one thousand pounds,

<sup>1</sup> Jones, *History of Georgia*, I pp. 460; II pp. 73, 143.

\* References to the published laws will not be given. The dates will easily suffice to locate any reference.

"the whole of which amount shall be applied to the sole purpose of instituting such Academy agreeable to the Constitution and Charter of the University." The resolution further proceeded to name commissioners for ten of the eleven counties of the state.<sup>1</sup>

The reference above given to "the Constitution and Charter of the University" opens up one of the most interesting bits of educational history to be found in the whole period of American life. By act of Feb. 25, 1784, the legislature set aside 40,000<sup>1</sup> acres of land for the endowment of a "college or seminary of learning," and appointed seven named men "trustees for the said college" and empowered them "to do all such things as to them shall appear requisite and necessary to forward the establishment and progress of the same."

So far nothing especially interesting except priority of date. But on Jan. 27, 1785, an act was passed "for the more full and complete establishment of a public seat of learning," which contains certain remarkable provisions. The university was placed at the head of the state system and "all public schools instituted or to be supported by funds or public monies in this state shall be considered as parts or members of the University." The Board of Trustees of the university and a certain *ex-officio* Board of Visitors were to compose a *Senatus Academicus* whose duty it should be to "consult and advise not only upon the affairs of the University, but also to remedy the defects, and advance the interests of literature through [out] the state in general." Its further duty was "to recommend what kind of schools and academies shall be instituted . . . in the several parts of the State, and prescribe what branches of education shall be taught and inculcated in each. They shall also examine and recommend the instructors to be employed in them, or appoint persons for that purpose." It was further provided that "the presi-

<sup>1</sup> Georgia House Journal ms. p. 397 f. (14 Feb. 1786). Why Camden county should be omitted is not clear. A like amount later fixed/ at \$815 was given as each new county academy was instituted until the year 1835.

<sup>2</sup> This seems clearly the first legislative action founding a state university in this country. New York followed shortly after, May 1, 1784. Why the University of Georgia authorities should yield their priority by publishing 1785 as the year of their foundation does not appear.

dent of the University . . . shall visit" these schools and "examine into their order and performances."<sup>1</sup>

Whence came the suggestion for this "one general and complete establishment"?<sup>2</sup> has been a matter of interested inquiry. A persisting tradition has named Abraham Baldwin as the immediate author, but Adiel Shrewood (*Gazetteer of Georgia*, 2nd ed., p. 183) says that he had been unable to verify this, and the contrariwise it was Stephens of Chatham who was Chairman of the Committee to report the bill. But how came Stephens (or Baldwin) to think up so unique a plan unknown at that time in this country<sup>3</sup> and so far as appears unknown in certain of its most striking details even abroad? True enough, many have said it was an instance of French influence and have spoken of the French university scheme as similarly all inclusive. Unfortunately for this theory the Georgia plan preceded the French by many years. Some have suggested Diderot's scheme drawn up for Catharine of Russia; but two fatal defects rule this out: Diderot's plan was not published till in the 19th century and it did not contemplate the union of many scattered schools. So far as appears this most remarkable anticipation of later state developments originated within the confines of this state. It may be added in conclusion that the *Senatus Academicus* functioned—not very energetically, it is true—till 1837, when the county academies ceased to receive state aid, and remained on the statute book till 1859. But "the one general and complete establishment" never became a vital actuality. A frontier people were not ready for so high a degree of centralization.

In addition to the funds provided for the founding of the several county academies there was created in 1820 a "literary fund" to consist of all confiscated estates, escheats, reversions, and the like, the income of which should go to the support of the county academies. The next year an academic

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<sup>1</sup> Manual of the University of Georgia. Atlanta, 1890.

<sup>2</sup> Preamble to the bill.

<sup>3</sup> New York's similar plan, so far as concerns schools below college grade followed two years later, 1787.

fund of \$250,000 was set aside, the income from which was to be divided among the several counties in proportion to their representation in the lower house. The share of each county was to go to the support of the county academy or to be divided among the several privileged academies, if as was true in a good many instances special laws had been passed giving these academies equal participation with the county academy. The income from this fund varied from year to year, generally approximating \$20,000. This would mean around \$250 a year for a typical county. This support was continued until 1837, when as we shall later see the "Academic Fund" was with the "Poor School Fund" merged into a "Common School Fund."

The growth in the number of the academies shows an interesting increase. The following figures compiled from various original sources give the numbers organized or chartered. The figures for the first two or three decades are uncertain. A general provision was made as we saw, in 1786, for organizing counties in ten of the then existing counties, but it is difficult to say just when the actual organizations were effected. The later figures are quite accurate, in that they give the actual numbers chartered by the legislature. It must, however, be remembered that charters do not necessarily mean actual schools. Moreover, the same school was occasionally chartered over again.

DECADES	NUMBER CHARTERED	TOTAL TO DATE
1781-1790	5	5
1791-1800	5	10
1801-1810	4	14
1811-1820	17	31
1821-1830	107	138
1831-1840	256	394

The figures cannot be continued beyond 1840, for the reason that from 1843 the courts as well as the legislature had the power of granting charters, and the court records are not in print. The crest of the wave, however, had been reached in 1837, when 60 were chartered. The three years

of 1841-43 show an aggregate of only 33. Three possible factors operated to give these large numbers: a popular breaking down in the standards necessary to constitute an academy; the absence of any other incorporated body capable of owning school land and houses; and third the advantage of participation in the state academy funds. A fairly reliable statement of the situation in 1829 is given by Sherwood:

"The total number of academies is now nearly 90. Many of these, however, are misnamed; for an academy supposes instruction in the higher branches of education; but some are no better than '*old field schools*.' We hope the legislature will see to it, in future, that no charter of incorporation shall be granted to any body of trustees, unless it be a *sine qua non*, that in such academy there shall be taught, at least a part of the year, the learned languages and higher branches of the mathematics. Deception enough has been practiced in *manufacturing* academies, as they are called, to get money from the Treasury. When established, they have no better claims to pecuniary aid than any other school; they draw money merely because they have trustees, and are incorporated."<sup>1</sup>

In the same connection Sherwood estimates the pupils attending these academies to be about 4000.

Some figures based mainly on the census of 1850 give the number of Georgia academies at 219 and the number in attendance at 9,059 and an annual income of \$184,849. In these figures Georgia stands tenth from the top of the states in number of academies.\* Beginning in 1833 the annual

<sup>1</sup> A. Sherwood, *A Gazetteer of the State of Georgia*, 2nd edition, Philadelphia, 1829, p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> Barnard's *American Journal of Education*, 1:368. It may be well in connection to call attention to the injustice Georgia has permitted by allowing others at a distance to be the only ones to publish the facts. In 1833 the secretary of the American Education Society published in the *American Quarterly Register of Boston* (5:273-333) an account of secondary education in the United States as he had been able to find it. Massachusetts was credited with 83 academies and private schools of various sorts of which twenty-one had received a land endowment from the state (law of 1797). New York had 57 academies which were receiving from the state \$10,000 annually. For Georgia only *four* secondary schools were mentioned, and no report made of the fact that Georgia was then distributing twice as much money to her academies as was New York. In Brown's *Making of our middle schools* (New York 1903), the best historic account we have, these misleading figures are reproduced as the best available for the period.

publication of the laws enacted by the state legislature included a report of the "branches of study" of the several academies receiving state aid. Of those reporting 51% say they teach the "higher" branches; 34%, "various;" and 15% say "English" branches. Five years later, 87½ report "various;" 11½, "English;" and 1%, "lower." These figures seem to indicate that half and more then teaching Latin and other higher branches.

The withdrawal of state aid in 1837 probably did not mean much as concerns support. The academy continued for several decades to be the main institution of secondary education, but gradually gave way before the public high school. So far as concerns our present study the academy movement was the earliest form of state participation in education. For a time it promised exceedingly well. It is greatly to be regretted that the excellent foundation, real pioneer work, was not built on. The extent of the influence of the academy system on the ultimate state system of public education is not easy to state. It probably prepared people to help think along the line of public interest in educational affairs. But the specific origin of our present state system is to be found in a humbler beginning.

It is from the "poor school fund" that we trace the development of the idea of the free tax-supported and state controlled public school in Georgia. The first step began better than it continued. In December 1817, it was resolved by the state legislature that whereas "... the education of the youth and the general advancement of useful knowledge are objects of primary importance; and whereas the present system of education in this state is not well calculated for the general diffusion and equal distribution of useful learning;" therefore "the sum of \$250,000 be ... and are hereby set apart and appropriated for the future establishment and support of Free Schools throughout this state."

This was evidently meant to be a school fund, the income of which should go to support schools. The idea of school



funds was then prevalent in the country. Connecticut has sold her western lands and invested the proceeds in a fund ample to support her elementary schools. An annual tax seemed an impossible burden, but a school fund, that was different. No plan was provided at this time (1817) for erecting these free schools. A year later in disposing of a newly acquired cession of land from the Indians, it was provided that "lots Nos. 10 and 100 shall be reserved and set apart, in each surveyor's district, for the education of poor children;" and the net proceeds of the sale of fractional lots were similarly to be used. The same year saw the incorporation of the Savannah Free School Society for "affording education to the children of indigent persons." Three years later a similar society was formed in Augusta, and both were supported in part from state and county funds. In 1820 the standing legislative committee on "Literature, Education and Free Schools" recommended that "a committee be appointed . . .to propose, arrange and digest a system of Education."

This committee took two years and recommended a "Poor School Fund", which was accepted December 1822. "One or more fit persons" were to be appointed by the Inferior Court of each county "to superintend the education of the poor children of said county." No child was to be received if his parents or estate paid "a tax exceeding fifty cents over and above their poll tax". A sum of \$12,000 was appropriated to be divided among the different counties in proportion to the number of poor children returned. The appointed supervisors should "cause any of the poor children so returned to go to school at such school as may be convenient in their respective neighborhoods, and the teacher shall present his account". Tuition was limited to the "reading, writing and the usual rules of arithmetic". The ages were fixed at from 8 to 18 years and no child was to have his tuition fees paid for more than three years. It will be noted that while this was limited to poor children, these were in no wise to be segregated, and the state undertook no authority or responsibility for establishing schools. It had probably been bet-

ter in the end if actual poor schools had been established. The change from them to general schools might have been easier, partly because the segregation would have aroused stronger opposition. As it was, this notion that the state was to buy schooling from privately managed schools was to curse the state for three-quarters of a century.

From this time there was considerable interest manifested in the direction of public schools. Baldwin county had the legislature pass for it a local system which would well stand criticism at this day: a county board of education, a county tax levy, teachers to be examined and licensed, official visiting of schools, local trustees to provide house from public funds, employ teachers and buy books for the indigent. The schools were to be free to all white males from 7 to 18 and for white females from 6 to 13. The act was to go into effect upon a vote of the people. I fear they voted against so startling an innovation, as I have found no other reference to it. In 1823 Glynn county provided a system of schools free for those whose parents did not pay more than \$2 state tax. Other counties followed, with "schools . . . for the education of poor children". These schools, it will be noted, were publicly organized and controlled. It were much to be desired that we had information as to how they worked, and whether only the poor attended. Gwinnet county in 1826 provided a system that seems to have been free to all. The culmination of these local acts was one in 1835 authorizing the judges of the inferior court to examine such teachers as were to receive public money.

The poor school law of 1822 was hardly on the books before amendments were called for. The next year saw among other changes the annual fund for distribution increased from \$1200 to \$2000 with other charges. But amend it as they would the law did not give satisfaction. Counties would not make returns. The administration was changed in various ways. Committee after committee reported that the plan was not working well. In 1829 the standing committee of the House reported "that the present

free school system of Georgia is miserably defective. The fund is entirely inadequate, and this though Georgia is possessed of ample means to consummate the most sanguine wishes of the philanthropist in regard to universal education." It recommended a committee to propose a complete system after correspondence with "such distinguished and intelligent persons in any part of the world" as might be deemed necessary. Two years later a similar recommendation was made. By 1836 the annual fund for distribution had reached \$25,000.

At this time (1836) the approaching distribution of the surplus revenue fund gave an impetus to the movement for a better system. It was resolved to devote one-third of the amount so received to a permanent "Free School and Education Fund" and a joint committee was appointed "to digest a plan of common school education, best adapted to the genius, habits of life and thought of the people of Georgia." That all necessary information might be had, the committee was authorized to send a sub-committee of two to "visit different parts of the United States, and particularly the New England states". They were further authorized to correspond with properly informed persons either in this country or Europe in order to get information regarding "different systems of common schools" in Europe. Expenses up to \$2000 were to be paid. This reference to European schools is to be correlated with many studies about this time and later the Prussian schools in particular.<sup>1</sup>

The rising tide of "Jacksonian democracy" seems fairly evident in these steps. There were outspoken complaints that the existing scheme was not democratic. The academies were unduly aristocratic. This spirit manifested itself clearly in the resulting bill passed in 1837. A general state fund for "Common Schools" was composed of the pre-existing Academic and Poor Funds and one-third of the Surplus Revenue Fund. Five school commissioners were to be

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1. Cubberley, *Public Education in the United States*. (Boston 1919) p. 270 ff.

appointed for each county by the Inferior Court. The counties were to be districted, and the funds apportioned to these according to the white population between the ages of 5 and 15. Each district was to have three trustees selected by the commissioners (or in default elected by the people). Commissioners and Trustees were authorized to hold titles to land for school houses. State funds were to pay the teachers and furnish books and stationery to children whose parents were unable to pay for same. All white children to be taught as scholars in their respective districts. In thinly settled districts an itinerating system was provided the school to stay no more than three months in one place. Amendments adopted the next year authorized the trustees to add to the school funds by public subscription and the several county courts were authorized in their discretion to levy an extra tax—not over 50% of the general levy—to be added to the common school fund. At last Georgia had on the books a comprehensive public school system for all the white children. The distinction of wealth was still present, but state schools were provided for. The state purchase of education from private schools was to be abolished.

But alas! the people were not ready for such a step. A provision in the original bill for compulsory local tax had been stricken in the Senate, 42 to 28. The amendment of 1838 sought to accomplish the same end. But on top of the difficulty of organizing the new scheme came the great panic. Just what parts the respective factors played cannot now be stated, but in 1840 the whole was repealed. The Common School Fund—less the Surplus Revenue, which seems to have got lost in the breakdown of the panic—was thereafter to be called a "Poor School Fund." Tuition was to be paid as before 1837 for all "whose indigence in the opinion of the justices [of the peace] entitle them to participation in the poor school fund." The academy support had been wiped out, the Surplus Revenue lost, a system of state schools given up, and the old stigma of "poor school fund" restored. Apparently no gain anywhere.

In 1843 the Inferior Court was authorized upon the recommendation of the Grand Jury to levy an extra tax to help "educate the poor children of their respective counties. The age limits were fixed at 8 and 16. At this time the Poor School Fund was declared to be 1733 shares in the Bank of Georgia, 890 shares in the Bank of Augusta, and all available assets of the Central Bank. Disregarding the last named and assuming \$100 as the value of the other shares, the total fund was now about \$250,000, about what the Poor School Fund alone had been prior to 1836. The education funds had been made to suffer for somebody's bad management.

Following the repeal of 1840, there came a renewed interest in county systems. Bullock county arranged a scheme of free schools for all free whites between 7 and 18, paying tuition for not more than six months a year at not more than \$3 a quarter. Bryan county adopted a "free system of education" "for all free whites" between 6 and 16. Emanuel tried much the same, but repeals changed some or all. In 1849 justices of the peace were authorized to certificate participating teachers in Lumpkin, Union and Murray counties. In 1847 and 1849 committees were authorized to report improvements in the system but no change was made until 1852. In that year a new bill was passed but still along the same old lines. The school fund was slightly increased. The ordinary of the county was authorized to levy and collect such tax as the Grand Jury might recommend for the purpose of educating the children of the poor. In 1854 the teachers of some 28 counties were authorized to furnish books at cost to the poor and have them paid for out of the Poor School Fund.

In 1858 a significant step forward is taken, apparently in keeping with the movement which brought Joseph E. Brown of North Georgia into the gubernatorial chair. A new law was passed, with several progressive features. The sum of \$100,000 of the annual net earnings of the Western

and Atlantic Railroad was added to the school fund income and the principal of the Fund was to be increased *pari passu* as the state debt was paid off. Each county was authorized to use these funds for the instruction of children in "the elementary branches" of education as it might see fit, "the plan to be devised by the Grand Jury and Ordinary. The Inferior Court on the recommendation of the Grand Jury was authorized to levy such additional tax as they might think fit. No teacher was to participate until he had obtained a certificate of a board of examiners. The word poor is not mentioned in the act, and the effort was clear to encourage progressive counties to move ahead. An amendment the succeeding year provided a Board of Education for each county, with power to choose its own county system, and defined "the elementary branches" to consist of spelling, reading, writing and arithmetic, and if desired English grammar and geography. This optional enlargement of the curriculum points to progress over the poor school expectations. By special act the Boards of Education in Lincoln, Jasper and Terrell counties were authorized to locate public school houses and examine and employ teachers. The next year Gordon and Gilmer counties were authorized to organize complete county systems of free schools. So far as I can see these special acts were unnecessary, the general act permitting as much, but the general reaching out towards a real public school system seems clear.

This brings us to the eve of the Civil War. The convention which passed the Secession Ordinance framed a new constitution. The constitution of 1789 which had lasted till 1861 included a provision that "The arts and sciences shall be promoted in one or more seminaries of learning" and directed the further support of "those already established."<sup>1</sup> This looked clearly to the actual opening of the state university already provided for but in actual operation till 1801. That this provision contemplated support also to the acade-

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<sup>1</sup> The Constitution of 1789 had ignored the subject of education altogether.

mies seems probable, though not certain. It did not, however, indicate any strong determination to extend the range of state action in education. The Constitution of 1861<sup>1</sup> after discussion led by T. R. R. Cobb and N. M. Crawford adopted a provision that "The General Assembly shall have power to appropriate money for the promotion of learning and science, and to provide for the education of the people". The "learning and science" may be taken to refer to the state university. "To provide for the education of the people" clearly contemplates, as the words themselves and the debates indicate, a system of education for the whole people. The organic law had finally moved definitely though as yet only permissively beyond the mere poor school idea. It may be remarked as indicating the temper of the convention that an amendment was offered to this educational clause that any legislative action to carry it into effect be not valid unless passed by a two-thirds vote of each house. We may surmise that certain among the tax-payers were seeking to postpone a supposedly evil day. T. R. R. Cobb, however, led the opposition to victory and the amendment was defeated.

Naturally no progress was made during the war. Indeed it was impossible to hold what had been gained. The close of the war, however, brought some interesting legislation. Indeed the changed condition of affairs shows itself in a distinctly different tone noticeable along several lines. The Constitutional Convention which repealed the Act of Secession reenacted the educational clause of 1861<sup>2</sup> with an addition providing for the early resumption of the State University and for endowing the same. The legislature of 1865-66—still in the hands of native whites, be it recalled—took several educational steps. It provided a board of education of Savannah and Chatham county to establish a system of schools for white children, and a similar provision for Columbus. By special resolution a committee of ten was appointed

<sup>1</sup> This constitution by a peculiar aberration or prejudice is ignored in Poore's Federal and State Constitutions.

<sup>2</sup> Although Barnard's *American Journal of Education* (17 : 100) explicitly states that "in the Constitution of 1865, the educational provision was omitted."

"to digest and report . . . a common school system for the state". The secession sympathies of this legislature are—if any should doubt—amply shown; in its recommendation of "the Southern University series" of school text books, in its various provisions for the maimed and indigent soldiers of this state, and in its resolutions relative to the imprisonment of that "illustrious prisoner of state, Jefferson Davis."

The legislative enactment of the next December (1866) following the report of this committee put on the statute books a complete "system of Georgia schools". A State Superintendent of Public Education was to be appointed by the Governor. "Any free white inhabitant—between the ages of 6 and 21", and any disabled "soldier of this state", was entitled to instruction" without charge for tuition or incidental expenses". Each county was to have a commissioner of schools who should lay off the county into districts. Each district was to elect three trustees who should locate schools, hold real estate, employ teachers, prescribe (in the absence of instruction from the State Superintendent) a course of study and textbooks. Examination and certification of teachers were provided. Support contemplated state funds, a county levy by the Inferior of not more than 100% on the state levy, and besides the possibility of private subscription to extend school terms. Any branch of education might be taught. The act was to go into effect Jan. 1, 1868. The evolution seemed complete. At last provision for an inclusive system of free public schools.

What might have been we cannot say. The efforts of the native white to effect reconstruction under President Johnson's plan were blocked. The act of 1866 was never given a trial. The state of affairs leading to the Constitution of 1868, created a new situation out of which came the act of 1870, but all of this lies outside the limits of our inquiry.

We may in résumé sum our study. The colonial period furnished little beyond the suggestion that the government should foster education. This the Constitution of 1777 de-



clared, and a system of county academies under a state university was organized. A far-reaching and highly centralized scheme of state education was devised but never put adequately into operation. Under legislative enactment the state university was instituted and the county academies organized were from 1783 until 1835 given a fund for initial organization and from 1820 to 1837 were given in the aggregate an annual support of about \$20,000, at that time a more liberal support, it is believed, than was similarly given in any other state. Efforts to provide elementary education for the people generally began in 1817, but nothing was done until 1822 when a plan was adopted for paying the tuition of poor children in any convenient school. The annual maintenance of this began at \$12,000 and was soon increased to \$20,000 and later \$25,000. This gave little satisfaction anywhere. Various counties tried schools of their own, some for poor children, some apparently for all children.

In the later thirties a stronger democratic feeling rejected the idea of two school systems and seizing the occasion of the Surplus Revenue distribution determined upon one inclusive state supported and controlled system of schools. The advance step proved, in conjunction with the panic of 1837, more than the state would stand and the year 1840 saw the old "Poor School Fund" restored, the Academic Fund and the Surplus Revenue fund having apparently been lost. This lapse back to the Poor School idea continued without much change until 1858, in spite of many efforts at improvement.

In 1858 apparently under the leadership of Joseph E. Brown the word "poor" at length vanished from the educational statutes. The school fund was quadrupled, and each county was encouraged to go as far as it would in the direction of a real public school system. The future looked bright. The constitution of 1861 registered in definite terms the new outlook. The close of the war saw the native whites put on the statute books a complete scheme for the free education of

all white children, all branches of education contemplated.

The claim often made that the native white South was opposed to the public school in theory and practice finds in this study little support. The history in Georgia could be paralleled in most of the country. From 1777 to 1837 there was within the state a clear development and evolution of the public school idea. Then followed a set back, in this case of two decades, the why of which is not altogether clear. The year 1858 marked a distinct forward step, and the new outlook was registered in the Constitution of 1861. The year 1866 showed that the evolution already long under way had been hastened by the war. In that year a comprehensive scheme of free public education was adopted only to be set aside by the management of affairs from without.

Why was Georgia slow in developing free public schools? The surmise of one man may prove no better than another's. The writer sees in a variety of factors, possible reasons for the slower development in Georgia: a rural population has everywhere been slower than urban to take up the idea of tax supported schools; the relatively greater management of public affairs by the well-to-do possibly gave the larger tax payers a better opportunity for averting tax supported schools than was found elsewhere; the strongest religious denominations in the state had originally grown up rather by ignoring than by cultivating education and accordingly were slower to bring effective influence to bear in behalf of education than were some other denominations in other sections. Slow or not, however, the development was there, falteringly but eventually, beginning with a subsidy to secondary education and a dole to the poor there came in the end an inclusive scheme for state schools free to all of the white children.